

**Town of Mansfield  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
Meeting of 17 June 2009  
Conference B, Beck Building  
MINUTES**

*Members present:* Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Joan Stevenson, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* JC Beall, Katrina Higgins, Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent), Greg Padick (Town Planner).

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:40p by Chair Quentin Kessel.
2. The draft minutes of the 20 May 09 meeting were approved as written.
3. IWA referral W1433 (Beall & Higgins, Wormwood Hill Rd). The applicants propose a single family house on a wooded lot on the S. side of Wormwood Hill Rd., about 500 ft. from the Ashford town line. (The lot is the "first cut" from one of the Green family parcels.) Portions of its driveway and septic system lie within 150 ft. of (and uphill from) a small wetland, c.120 ft. away at their closest points; the reserve septic system lies wholly within 150 ft. of the wetland, c.80 ft. away at its closest point. The wetland is probably not a vernal pool, as it appears to contain standing water only briefly. A motion (Kessel, Silander) finding no significant wetland impact as long as the erosion and sedimentation controls shown on the map are in place during construction was adopted – Kessel & Silander voting in favor, Lehmann (a friend of the applicants) abstaining.
4. Windham Region Land Use Plan. The Windham Council of Governments (WinCOG) is updating its 2002 Regional Land Use Plan for towns in the Windham Region. According to Town Planner Greg Padick, this plan is purely advisory. However, granting agencies pay attention to it, so any inconsistencies between the regional plan and state & town plans should be resolved before the 2009 update is approved. The Town aims to submit its comments to WinCOG by 06 August. WinCOG's goal is to keep the region attractive; the regional plan's strategy is to encourage development in certain areas and to conserve the rest. Proposed land uses are shown on maps. Padick pointed to two areas in which Mansfield's land-use plans and what these maps call for are not compatible:
  - The regional plan calls for preserving the area S. of Pleasant Valley Rd. and W. of Mansfield City Rd. from development, while Mansfield proposes a mixture of preservation and development.
  - The Warren property off Maple Rd. is now under contract for an assisted living facility, so this area would be intensely developed, though it is not identified as a development area on the regional map.Padick suggested that CC members look carefully at the text and maps of the proposed 2009 update (available online at [www.wincog.org](http://www.wincog.org)) before the Commission's 15 July meeting, with a view to formulating comments for the Town at that meeting.

5. Common driveways. Padick indicated he would be happy to discuss “Common driveways: their use and abuse” at another time.

6. Aquifer protection. Padick reviewed the status of stratified-drift aquifer (SDA) protection in Mansfield. The state-mandated municipal aquifer-protection program covers only SDAs with existing wells serving 1,000 or more people: in Mansfield, only the University’s level-A mapped Willimantic and Fenton River well-fields qualify. Most of the other SDAs in Mansfield are in areas zoned 2-acre residential, which, in Padick’s view, provides sufficient protection for them. The significant exceptions are the Storrs and Pleasant Valley areas, where more intense development could degrade SDAs. Padick believes that present regulations, if appropriately updated, would provide adequate protection for SDAs. An Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone setting forth special rules for development in aquifer areas is not needed, in his view. The prohibitions on certain kinds of development found in the Tolland and Ridgefield overlays can be achieved by zoning regulations. In particular, permitted uses of the Pleasant Valley zone can be restricted by prohibiting certain activities and/or requiring applicants to show that the activities they propose will not threaten the aquifer.

At the same time, Padick pointed out that most towns protect aquifers to protect water supply, whereas Pleasant Valley has access to all the water it needs from Mansfield Hollow Reservoir. At some point, the cost of increased aquifer protection will exceed its benefits. Protection for SDAs would be enhanced by prohibiting trucks carrying fuel oil and other hazardous materials on roads over these aquifers, but few would judge such a trade-off to be acceptable.

Padick suggested that the CC consider at its July meeting what changes to the Town’s zoning regulations are needed to protect SDAs, and communicate its recommendations to him. He would then aim to provide a draft of revisions for consideration at our August meeting.

7. CL&P Interstate Reliability Project. CL&P’s filing with the Connecticut Siting Council will be put off until fall, Padick reported.

8. Ponde Place. As far as Padick knows, the Ponde Place developers don’t yet have a well permit from the Department of Public Health, which has asked them to study the effect of withdrawals on the movement of ground water from the old UConn chemical landfill.

9. Blight. Silander observed that many of the houses along Hunting Lodge Rd. are in poor shape and asked what the Town could do about it. Padick indicated that the Quality of Life Committee is working on it. The root of the problem, in his view, is a shortage of suitable off-campus student housing, which creates pressure for conversions.

10. The meeting adjourned at 9:05p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 15 July 09.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary  
18 June 09; approved 15 July 09